32:11

FOR SUCH AN AGE AS THIS

LYNN HAROLD HOUGH, Th.D., D.D.
Minister
The American Presbyterian Church
Montreal

Published by the American Bible Society for use in the observance of Universal Bible Sunday on December 8, 1929

FOREWORD

The American Bible Society takes real satisfaction in placing in the hands of the clergymen of America this brochure from the gifted pen of Lynn Harold Hough. Whether the Bible is adapted to this problematic age is answered in a reassuring affirmative. Dr. Hough's analysis of the Bible's potentiality in helping to evaluate and solve some of the religious problems of the twentieth century will aid pastors in their observance of Universal Bible Sunday.

The poster accompanying this brochure illustrates graphically some of the leading influences characteristic of today. That the Bible has a relationship to all of them, and to many others incapable of pictorial reproduction, is the conviction of the American Bible Society. This poster placed where it can be studied leisurely is bound to direct attention first to itself and then to its message.

That the Bible is adapted to "such an age as this" is again emphasized in the selection of Scripture passages appearing in the folder prepared as a Responsive Reading for congregational use. Sufficient additional copies of these Responsive Readings may be obtained free by using the enclosed postcard. It is urged that the request for a supply of them be mailed at once.

Universal Bible Sunday, to be observed this year on Sunday, December 8, is sponsored by the American Bible Society in order that through a simultaneous emphasis churchgoing Christians may be reminded of the value of the Scriptures and may be encouraged to a more faithful use of the Book of Books.

FOR SUCH AN AGE AS THIS

LYNN HAROLD HOUGH, TH.D., D.D.

ERASMUS dreamed of the day when men should follow the plow with their minds full of the golden words which lie in the Scriptures. Luther in a sense created the German tongue in the very hours when he filled it with the glory of the Old Testament and the New. If the language received the Bible, the Bible transformed the language. Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch thinks that there have been two miracles in English literature. Shakespeare is the miracle in poetry. The Authorized Version is the miracle in prose. The Bible has given conscience a new vocabulary. It has set the spiritual life to music in immortal speech. It has been a seminal power of inspiration for our whole Western civilization. It has given the soldier doing battle for righteousness his trumpet and his sword. It has filled peace with moral and spiritual beauty and with a kind of military strength. It has given to quiet men and women a song which has sung in their hearts during hours of labor. It has given to every human relation a new beauty, and to every moral and spiritual aspiration a new authenticity. It has confronted the ages as an inspiration and a judge. It has given men the hopes for which they have lived and the standards by which they have judged. It stands royally in the midst of the pageant of the past. It has provided in its moral and spiritual quality the very cement which holds together the parts of history and has given to life a meaning and a goal.

Is the Bible also ready to meet the demands of such an age as this? Has it a commanding word to say in relation to the urgent necessities of contemporary life? Is the American Bible Society distributing a collection of golden and glowing memories, coming rich with the beauty of the most gracious thought and living of other days but impotent in our own? Will the fire which burns in the Bible blaze upon our modern hearths? May we find by means of the Scriptures the dynamo which will turn the vast and complicated machinery of the world in which we live? Is life fundamentally organic so that the principles which have proved so potent in other ages are sure to hold their place of power in our own? Is the one figure which moves so regally through the pages of the Gospels the Master of our own time as well as for the centuries which lie behind? Such are some of the questions which press upon us with persistent energy.

I

When we attempt to survey the new age the first man our eyes are likely to fall upon is the salesman. He is not one man standing alone. He is a great multitude of men. They are all shouting. They are all gesticulating. They are selling material products. They are selling ideas. They are selling institutions. They are selling enterprises. They are organizing hopes and fears and joys and sorrows, and offering them for sale. They are

selling themselves. They are masters of publicity. They are experts in organization. They are keen students of psychology. They are very typical men in this passionately energetic age.

Indeed they are so important and so efficient and so complacent that it has actually been suggested that Jesus should be interpreted in the terms of their way of life. It is a little strange to think of his coming to them and saying "I too am a salesman. We are really very much alike. And so we shall get along very well together." That has scarcely been his way in the past. Perhaps it is not just likely that this is his way in the present or will be his method in the future. Perhaps the great experience which the supersalesman needs is not that which will come when he meets another salesman mightier than himself. It may be that a generation of salesmen needs to come into contact with a series of realities which transcend salesmanship. "Great is Diana of the Ephesians" was a most effective watchword. It was the battle cry of salesmen who felt their trade to be in danger. But it was a battle cry used against the founder of Christianity and not a watchword used to win men to give to him their allegiance. It is never the work of Christianity to pull out of the fire the chestnuts of the masters of a proud external success in any generation.

The man everybody needs to know will scarcely appear as the Supreme Salesman in an age of high pressure salesmanship.

But if the message of the Bible is likely to bring a much needed standard of criticism to an age when the salesman is mounting to the throne of the world, it is also true that this same message will comprehend and interpret and bring to its noblest expression that which is good in the activities of the salesman, even as it has interpreted and brought to their best quality of life and action men of so many types. In an age which is so likely to measure everything by its market value rather than by its intrinsic value, what could be more important or significant than a new contact with the finely stern and unbending conscience of the Old Testament, and with that high and gracious sense of values which emerges in the New? The power to detect quality is very greatly needed in an age of salesmen. Where can you learn this fine art better than from those men and women whose moral experience speaks to you from the Scriptures? The power to bring quality to the attention of men and the loyalty which refuses to do anything else mark the salesman whose work is socially productive, and whose activities make a real contribution to the life of the world. The secret of just this power and just this loyalty lies in the Bible, waiting to be grasped by those who make its meaning their own. The touch of Ithuriel's spear revealed everything in its true quality. The Bible is that spear of Ithuriel which is needed more than any other weapon in an age of salesmen.

II

Organization is not precisely a new phenomenon. The Assyrians were organizers as well as conquerors. The Persians had their own secrets of effective organization. And the Romans made the world a huge system of life, mighty engineers in the building of a supernation as they were. It may be said safely however that in vast areas of life

organization has actually come to its own in the period in which we live. There are individual business enterprises which are as mighty as an empire. And the organization has a completeness and an intricacy which fairly defy description. There is organization for production. There is organization for transportation. And so organization covers a vastly larger field than that of which we have spoken in dealing with salesmanship. The typical modern man is caught somewhere in a vast network of organization. He is not like a lone horseman in a vast prairie striking a match and feeling a strange sense of isolation as he looks upon its tiny light. Indeed life presses upon him so closely that he is not at all sure where his own individuality ends and the lives of others begin. Completely definite and thoroughly worked out opinions are ready for his use on every subject. He meets regulation before he leaves his home in the morning and he is accompanied by some sort of regulation until he goes to bed at night. There is no doubt much gain in all this. An unorganized society is an impotent society. A highly organized society feels almost omnipotent. But all this is likely to be very hard on the individual. It leaves little room for initiative. It crushes out individuality. It is likely to leave human eyes dull and heavy with no sense of eternity shining in their depths. Organization gives efficiency to a man's hand. It can scarcely be said that it puts eternity into his heart. Like the windowless office building which some men plan it may be very useful but it has no sun in its sky. Indeed it has no sky where a sun might shine. And it has no vast and glorious vistas. A good deal of the time the modern man lives in a windowless building. He may be proud of his electric light and of the cleansed air pumped through his room. But fastened within his heart is a wistful longing for wide spaces, for winds blowing over tossing seas, for mountains with snow upon their summits, for an experience which escapes from organization and attains to creative liberty and joy.

Alfred Noyes has put into his lovely poem "Lavender" some of this wistful loneliness:

"Lavender, lavender!
His songs were fair and sweet,
He brought us harvests out of heaven,
Full sheaves of radiant wheat;
He brought us keys to Paradise,
And hawked them thro' the street;
He brought his dreams to London,
And dragged his weary feet.

Lavender, lavender!
He is gone. The sunset glows;
But through the brain of London
The mystic fragrance flows.
Each foggy cell remembers,
Each ragged alley knows,
The land he left behind him,
The land to which he goes."

It is quite clear that the modern man caught in the wheels of organization needs some inner emancipation, some fashion in which the spirit may escape though the hands are held to the deadly monotony of dull routine. The automatic worker must find spiritual freedom if his whole life is not to atrophy. And men high in organizations, who, with all their sense of power, are coming to have pattern minds and to be driven by organizations they think they drive, need far more than they realize to come upon inner vistas wide and shining. They need to say with the mystic poet "I saw eternity the other night."

In upon this situation the Scriptures come like winds fresh from the mountains. They give vistas to the soul even when the body is

held in places with no wide outlook. They are full of the sense of life out of doors in spaces swept by winds and fertilizing rains. Nights in Syria have a glory all of their own with the near and friendly stars shining and the feeling of infinite spaces reaching far beyond. And the majesty and beauty of the Syrian night broods like a vast and gracious and mysterious wonder over no end of pages of the Bible. You leave the crowded cities with their highly organized life and pass out upon wide plains, and climb the heights of regal hills, and feel an emancipation of the spirit in every adventure in the Old Testament and the New. But deeper than this the Scriptures set a constant and supreme value upon personality. Individual men are all the while lifted from the mass of life. The Old Testament is a book of heroes. The New Testament is a book of heroes. Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and Rome may be in the background but leaders and prophets stand forth in the stark and splendid significance of individual life. Egypt cannot crush out the personal vigor of Moses. Assyria is but a background for the greatness of Isaiah. Jeremiah is more than Babylon. The great Galilean is more than the Rome of the Cæsars. To a man caught in the meshes of organization there is something infinitely refreshing about all this. In this great world of the spirit of man and the spirit of God you need not say "things are in the saddle and ride mankind." The individual does count. "All souls are mine" rings from the lips of a great prophet. And the sense of the value of every particular human spirit for Almighty God gives hard-pressed men in this difficult modern world a new standing ground.

Organization has indeed taught us that the individual is a part of something larger than himself. And this perception is kept keenly alive in the Scriptures. The heroes of the Bible are always heroes because they have found a cause greater than themselves. They are heroes because they have found a God greater than themselves. And as you see their vision of God's way in human life, you begin to feel that organization itself can be made the servant of personality and not its tyrannical master. You begin to think of using all the force of organization for the conservation of the great moral and spiritual values. You begin to see the whole modern scheme bent to the purposes of the living God and the society of friendly men. At the very moment when the Bible shows a way of inner emancipation it reveals a way of outer mastery. The organizations themselves are to become the instruments of the God who is the father of men. So shall personality become safe in a world of forces whose very threat to its life is also an opportunity for the revealing of its power.

III

One day last summer the author of this brochure rode from the railroad in the valley up to Jerusalem in an automobile of American manufacture. It seemed odd enough to go gliding toward the ancient city with the engine humming and the Syrian chauffeur with his clear quick eyes and his steady hand at the wheel. One thought of those long-fled years when the ass was the carrier of powerful kings. One remembered that Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on an ass. He had a word of mastery for that

ancient day. You still see camels with their burdens in Jerusalem. As you look at their awkward ease of motion are you tempted to think that they too represent the world of the prophets and of Jesus? Are you tempted to think that the world of swift moving cars—all the complicated world of modern machinery—has passed beyond his ken? Is it possible to think of him as Lord of a world of moving wheels and bolts and softly humming dynamos? Is the Bible best represented by lonely ivy growing upon a forgotten wall? Or is it like a tree of life yet containing healing for the nations? Is it a memory of tragic loneliness? Or is it a power more potent than dynamos, more effective than great engines? Perhaps you look up at a passing aeroplane in Syria and as you follow it with pursuing eyes to dim distances, you wonder if it has made it impossible to see the bright shining of angels' wings. You think of all the vast steel structures in the world and you wonder if Bethlehem in Pennsylvania has taken the place of Bethlehem in Judæa. You enter a vast factory full of automatic workers—you see the power of the iron man in industry—and you wonder if the clear-eyed prophet of Nazareth can make himself heard in all this din.

The situation is serious enough and you turn with a half whimsical understanding to the foresight of the inhabitants of Samuel Butler's Erewhon who destroyed the machines before they became their masters. For all that you cannot go the full length of the suggestion of that great man Mahatma Gandhi and bring back the spinning wheel and throw the dynamo into the rubbish heap. The problem of the machine cannot be solved by an executioner. It must be solved by a master. If modern civilization is likened to a high-powered automobile we may gaze at the great machine with grave anxiety. But we will see sooner or later that we cannot meet the situation by destroying the machine. What we really need to do is to find a new driver. We will scarcely cease to produce machines. We must learn how to produce men who can be trusted to control and use the machinery for the purposes of moral and spiritual order, for the good of the world and the honor of God.

And the Book which the American Bible Society sends about the world still contains that secret. It does not tell us how to make machines. It does tell us how to make men who can be trusted with machines. It does tell us how to produce men who will not wreck civilization with the high-powered machinery which they construct. It does tell us how to produce men who will use the whole mighty output of the machine age for the purposes of the Kingdom of God.

All fear that the Scriptures have become antiquated vanishes quickly enough when we see that persons great enough and good enough to save civilization from a sort of mechanical suicide are the supreme need of the hour. The age which produces machines is not particularly skilful in producing persons. The ages which produced great persons must teach us how to produce the masters of our machines.

There is no literature like the Bible for teaching us how to produce men who are stronger than their own desires. Only the Man who rode into Jerusalem on an ass knows the secret of making men whose hands will be steady upon our high-powered machines. The safety of the world is in the hands of the driver. And it is the driver who can be provided by the Man of Galilee.

IV

There is a story of a modern child who gravely repeated:

> "Twinkle, twinkle little star,
> I do not wonder what you are.
> What you are I know quite well,
> And your component parts can tell."

No one can deny that the physical and biological sciences have given us a new world and have vastly increased the area of our knowledge. We have become detectives pursuing nature to her very lair and extorting from her secrets which have been held in a close reserve for many a millennium.

There is something very impressive about the massive body of knowledge which science has made available during the last seventy-five years. For a period it seemed to possess a kind of royal grandeur. The very bulk of it seemed to promise the answer to all questions and the solution of all problems. Its practical application gave men a new sense of mastery. The telegraph and the telephone were rapidly followed by the broadcasting stations and all the wonders of radioactivity. The steam engine was followed by the high-powered motor and by the mastery of the problems connected with flight. On the theoretical side it seemed that all would fit together like the parts of a great puzzle picture. Physics, chemistry, and biology founded securely in mathematics were to give a unified and harmonious picture of the world. Professor Millikan tells how in the nineties a great European authority felt assured that the fundamental discoveries in physics had been made. Then came new physics. Then came radioactivity and relativity. A contemporary writer has expressed the situation in ironic rhyme in the words:

> "We thought that lines were straight and Euclid true.
> God said 'Let Einstein be' and all's askew."

Bertrand Russell interprets the net result as disqualifying the intellect for assurance about any fundamental matter. Professor Eddington interprets the new knowledge in such a way as to offer no menace to faith. There is confusion enough, and books on such subjects as "Taking the Name of Science in Vain," and "Science, the False Messiah" tell the tale of critical minds inspecting old dogmatisms in the realm of science with cool and fearless eye. In the midst of this new world which science has made what may we say of the power of the Scriptures to make a place for themselves? Can a pre-scientific literature show the way of life to a scientific man?

The whole history of modern science is illuminating at this point. Herbert Spencer in the good old Victorian days of science found a set of principles he might have taken from the New Testament to be the consummation of evolution itself. And when Nietszche construed evolution in an anti-Christian fashion he released a set of principles which it is now evident would be suicidal for civilization. Prince Kropotkin's "Mutual Aid" sees the very principles we associate with the Gospels active in the biological process itself. And the new world of which Professor Eddington speaks in his Gifford lectures is at least a world where the old materialism has received a death blow.

The very moment at which we live seems ready for a new reading of the Bible. Science is a classification of physical uniformities.

The Bible is a literature of personal relationships. Science measures things which can be measured. The Bible creates and appraises values in a world to which mathematical measurement cannot be applied.

There are two aspects connected with science. One has to do with the body of truth which the scientist discovers. The other has to do with the scientist as a discoverer. This second side has received all too little attention. For the scientist as a discoverer is fundamental in respect of all his discoveries. He is a responsible, thinking, choosing person. He is the sort of person the Scriptures presuppose. He is the sort of person to whom the Scriptures are addressed. And as he becomes conscious of the meaning of his own processes the Scriptures will win a new hearing and will come to a new place of command in his life and in the life of the world.

V

The literature which constitutes the Old Testament and the New grew up amid world empires. Nations grew great and sought to master the world. Some of them failed after brilliant efforts. Some of them succeeded in astonishing fashion. Babylonia, Assyria, Egypt, Persia, Macedonia, and Rome formed the background of the life of Israel. Their armies marched over her territories. Once and again she was forced to surrender to their iron strength. So the modern struggles for world power have not brought to men a speech whose accents were foreign to the Bible. The Spain of the Invincible Armada, the France of Napoleon, the Germany of 1914 gave new names to old passions, and the experience which becomes articulate in the Scriptures speaks quite in the terms of the problems and the tragic situations which mighty nations produce as they go their ambitious way. The Scriptures all the while are declaring that by means of and in spite of passionate and lusty nations struggling for power God goes on with his great work in the world. His hand does not relinquish its control when ambitious tyrants are maddest. And his hold upon life is sure when national self-consciousness is most full of bloated egotism. The Scriptures make it clear that not only the individual but the nation that sinneth shall die. They blow trumpet blasts in the name of moral laws which nations can antagonize but only to find that they are ground to powder by the overwhelming forces they have released. The great moral and spiritual laws are not helpless. Many of them are almost automatic, and the declaration of these laws in the midst of restless and self-conscious nations was never more timely than today. Amos at Bethel has a strangely significant word for Paris and London and Washington. The Book of Isaiah deserves to be a statesman's yearbook. It is always contemporary. And it is always explosive with moral power. Hope and doom play about all centers of national decision and the meaning of the destiny with which statesmen play has never been expressed with more complete understanding than in the Scriptures. In these matters the greatest of the prophets achieve a kind of ethical finality. When nations become full of a hot lust of pride; when "they are terrible and dreadful; their judgment and dignity proceed from themselves," they have not gotten beyond the need of the prophet's voice. When in proud consciousness of power a

tyrant "scoffeth at kings and princes are a derision unto him; he derideth every stronghold; for he heapeth up dust, and taketh it. Then shall he sweep by as a wind, and shall pass over, and be guilty, even he whose might is his God"—when a nation's ruler can be so described it has brought itself within the range of the guns of the greatest calibre of the Old Testament. Its own experience brings the prophets to its very door.

The social wrongs within a nation may seem new but in the eighth century before Christ Micah gave them sharp and terrible utterance.

The ways which disintegrate a nation and the ways which make it strong appear very clearly in the history of Israel. It is the vitality of all this ancient history which makes the Bible a book of nations as well as a book of individuals.

VI

In every period the idealism of the world tends to come to focus upon some particular endeavor. In our own time some of the best and ripest minds have given themselves to these international hopes, which lead us to rise above national discords and to dare to believe in a friendly life for all mankind. Mr. H. G. Wells in such books as "The Salvaging of Civilization" has made us feel that unless the ideal of a friendly and organic life for all the world can be realized the most terrible catastrophe lies ahead of us. The very triumphs of science are menacing enough unless the new knowledge can be put in the control of good will. The very elements which in one combination make a marvellous fertilizer in another constitute a deadly poison gas. The new knowledge can make the desert blossom as a rose. The new knowledge can destroy civilization. Which shall it be?

When we are told that at the moment there is a race between education and catastrophe we begin to ask ourselves what aids are waiting to serve us in this matter of training a generation for good will after so many generations have been trained for war. And if we make our survey honest and complete we will discover that the Scriptures come to us as unsurpassed influences for the breaking down of barriers and the creating of good will. "Something there is that doesn't love a wall" wrote Robert Frost. And that something is surely to be found in the Bible.

The Book of Ruth is a difficult book for the narrow nationalist. It is the tale of how a noble alien became the grandmother of that mighty King David who is always thought of as the founder of the Messianic line. The Book of Jonah is a simply impossible book for the man who desires to nurse hard and narrow prejudices. It tells of pagan sailors who were just men and gracious and friendly gentlemen. It tells of a metropolis of the world's loot which repented at the word of a prophet. It holds up to whimsical scorn a messenger of God who was so selfish that he preferred to love a vine which would die in a night rather than the great God of all if he had to share God's favor with a hated alien city. The Scriptures tell of a friendly road uniting the ancient foes, Egypt, Israel, and Assyria: "In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria; and the Egyptians shall worship with

the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth; for that Jehovah of hosts hath blessed them, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance." Your mind is fairly staggered as you read of Jehovah's calling Egypt "my people" and of Assyria and Egypt and Israel joined together as the friendly family of God in the earth.

An age which is cherishing international hopes finds even in the Old Testament words which seem written for its especial perusal.

And in the New Testament race and nation are unhesitatingly transcended. Paul's great battle is the fight to free Christianity from a self-conscious nationalism. Jesus foresees that he will "draw all men unto him." The Book of Acts ends when the world's religion has at last reached the capital of the world. Christianity by its very genius is the religion of international hopes. And these hopes have their roots in the greatest passages of the Old Testament and the New.

VII

In one of the famous dialogues of Lucian, Charon, who has left the underworld for a day in order to see what human life is like, is talking with Hermes while the two look out on the pageant of humanity from a great height. As he looks upon Milo of Croton, the great athlete who has just picked up a bull and is carrying it along the race course while the Greeks applaud, Charon says "He is mightily elated—what is one to think? Does it ever occur to him that he must die someday?" Later, still looking down from a great height Charon says to Hermes "Now that we are up here, how would it be for me to cry out to them at the top of my voice, to abstain from their vain endeavors and to live with the prospect of Death before their eyes? 'Fools (I might say) why so much in earnest? Rest from your toils. You will not live forever. Nothing of the pomp of this world will endure; nor can any man take anything hence when he dies. He will go naked out of the world, and his name and his lands and his gold will be another's and ever another's.' If I am to call out something of this sort, loud enough for them to hear, would it not do some good? Would not the world be better for it?"

Here at length is a matter in respect of which human experience has not changed. The modern salesman must die as did the ancient athlete. The modern master of organization must die even as did the ancient king. The modern scientist must die even as did the ancient shepherd. The Scriptures were written by men dwelling under the shadow of death. They were addressed to men who were to die. And the men who read them today are under that sentence of death which nature passes upon us all.

The men of the Old Testament were so busy with living that death was kept more or less in the background of their minds. As the centuries passed the grim figure of death stood more starkly before them. There were grave questionings. There were vague hopes. There were flashes of bright expectation. "If a man die shall he live again?" The question does at least get itself definitely asked in the days of the Old Testament. But it is only in the New that you hear the unhesitating and triumphant reply: "Now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of

them that slept." For in the New Testament death becomes a conquered foe and immortality an assured possession. Nowhere else are there such words of confidence. Nowhere else is there such joyous definiteness. "O death where is thy sting?" cries Paul. And it was in a world whose deepest convictions were gifts of the Christian faith that Browning wrote:

"Leave Now for dogs and apes!
Man has Forever!"

To be sure there are those who are ready to make the adventure of living without a sure confidence in a continual life beyond the grave. Some of them would find comfort in the nineteenth century word about the choir invisible whose members live again in lives made better by their presence. A posthumous influence is a noble thing. But it is a poor substitute for immortality. And the house which has no windows opening upon prospects beyond this life has a way of becoming a very dull gray. The artist who said "I paint of eternity" may have been guilty of exaggeration, but the man who with honest faith can say "I live for eternity" finds all his noblest motives renewed and his moral and spiritual energy tremendously reinforced. You cannot cloud the prospects of humanity and leave its motives unclouded. You cannot rob humanity of its immortal destiny and keep alive its sense of moral dignity. Some individual men and women living in an atmosphere saturated by the Christian hopes of the ages may retain their idealism in the presence of the breakdown of their belief in immortality. But the moral dignity of the race as a whole will stand or fall as the belief in life after death and, in a great moral and spiritual consummation, is retained or cast aside.

The New Testament contains the world's greatest literature on immortality. And if the belief has the future of civilization lying in its heart it is surely true that the New Testament brings to us reinforcement at a point where reinforcement is most profoundly needed. There come moments in the lives of the men most submerged in other matters when there emerges a deep and passionate desire for an authentic word which will give a sense that one can make investments in time which will have interest in eternity. It is a great matter that in the strange and noble awareness of this experience they should hear the words "I am the Resurrection and the Life." It is from the pages of the New Testament that a figure walks forth with these words upon his lips.

VIII

In the meantime we must live our lives in this present world. We shall be able to meet the experiences of today no less capably because of hopes which go beyond the far horizons. For as the old French proverbs say "To understand earth you must have known heaven." The year without an Easter Sunday would by no means be a better year in practical achievement. But there is a world of practical and momentary demands as well as a world of imperishable hopes. There is the world of Nehemiah the cupbearer to the King as well as the world of John the Baptizer preaching in the wilderness. The present and the future as far as this world goes belong to the practical dreamers. There are all too many dreamers who can never use their heads to make their dreams come true. And there

are all too many men of practical skill who have never been caught up by the passion of glorious dreams. So it comes to pass that great days of opportunity come and go with no man to match the day. The making of the practical dreamer is the most important task of the day in which we live.

It would be quite easy at this point to refer to the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament with all its shrewd practical sagacity. No end of its sentences have been rubbed into form by the hard exigencies of life itself. There is pith and penetration in many an epigram to be found in the Book of Proverbs. From lip to lip and from life to life these clear and cutting sentences must have passed. They ring with a sharp truth like coins upon a counter.

But the preparation for the tasks of practical life which the Scriptures offer goes a good deal more deeply into the places where experience takes root than would be possible if the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament were our only recourse. The power to perform one's tasks blithely and eagerly with a lilt of a song upon one's lips comes from a region beyond the incisive energy of keen-edged proverbs. To carry a bit of eternity in one's heart while one goes about the tasks of time is to have secrets of vitality of the most surprising power. There is a revelation of Jesus which only comes in the breaking of bread. And there is a making as well as a breaking of the bread which receives its whole quality from the fact that the Master is with us.

Henry Van Dyke in his poem "The Toiling of Felix" writes under the inspiration of the fifth of the sayings of Jesus found in a fragment of a papyrus book discovered in the rubbish heaps of the old city of Oxyrhynchus not far from the Nile. The saying is "Raise the stone, and thou shalt find me; cleave the wood and there am I." The thought is amplified in eager sentences:

> "Every toiler in the quarry, every builder on the shore,
> Every chopper in the palm-grove, every raftsman at the oar,
>
> Hewing wood and drawing water, splitting stones and cleaving sod,
> All the dusty ranks of labour, in the regiment of God,
>
> March together toward His triumph, do the task His hands prepare:
> Honest toil is Holy service; faithful work is praise and prayer."

> *"Nevermore thou needest seek me; I am with thee everywhere;*
> *Raise the stone, and thou shalt find me; cleave the wood, and I am there."*

> This is the gospel of labour, ring it, ye bells of the kirk!
> The Lord of Love came down from above, to live with the men who work.
>
> This is the rose that He planted, here in the thorn-curst soil:
> Heaven is blest with perfect rest, but the blessing of Earth is toil.

The capacity to fill the passing days with radiant meaning is the rarest power of all. And the man who makes the Scriptures his intimate and constant companion will be learning this secret all the while. One of the most amazing achievements of the Bible is the creation of an atmosphere where simple tasks are transfigured, and the work of the day has a light, unfamiliar to sea and land, shining upon it.

IX

When all these matters are considered the supporters of the American Bible Society surely have a right to feel that the very quality of the life of our age represents a call for just those sanctions and inspirations which speak with such commanding power in the documents which make up the Holy Scriptures. Every characteristic of our time is in its own way an indication of the need for some word which is uttered in the Bible. It has been the intellectual and moral and spiritual contemporary for every man who has lived during the last twenty centuries. And it looks level-eyed into the very lives of the men and women of today.

There is one more matter which deserves discussion while we are considering the typical aspects of the age we call our own. This has to do with the increasing sense that we all belong to a great and friendly community where each becomes the most himself by being the most to others. Our metropolitan cities are coming to sense the meaning of the life men have in common. Even our lonely countrysides are coming to a new understanding of the ties which bind men together. Stern and demanding and glorious are the responsibilities of the man who accepts a place in the great community of friendly men.

Benjamin Kidd at the very end of his life wrote a book, "The Science of Power," in which he pleaded for an education which would cause the altruistic qualities to capture the imagination and dominate the will of each new generation. The great friend is to take the place of the fighting man as the hero of the community of men of good will.

If our hero is to be the great friend then we are ready to prize very deeply any influences which will produce him. If there is a body of literature which will make citizens for the community of friendly men we will receive it as a gift of particular timeliness. Such a body of literature we possess in the Bible. Indeed the very idea of the community of good will is far more the gift of the Scriptures to our age than we have at all realized. In a sense the Bible creates the very needs which it supplies. It gives to us the very dreams which it causes to come true.

Here then we meet the Scriptures as the creators of our civilization and the inspirers of our hopes. Here we meet the Scriptures as our guides into way of productive fellowship and creative good will. The Community of Friendly Men is the best hope of our age. And as a hope and a possible achievement one must turn to the Bible for its justification and its support.

American Bible Society

Agencies and Cooperating State Societies in the United States

Orders for Scriptures should be sent to the Agency serving your territory

FOR	ADDRESS
MAINE	BIBLE SOCIETY OF MAINE 443 CONGRESS STREET PORTLAND, ME.
NEW HAMPSHIRE	NEW HAMPSHIRE BIBLE SOCIETY 20 SCHOOL STREET CONCORD, N. H.
VERMONT MASSACHUSETTS	MASSACHUSETTS BIBLE SOCIETY 41 BROMFIELD STREET BOSTON, MASS.
CONNECTICUT	CONNECTICUT BIBLE SOCIETY 7 HAYNES STREET HARTFORD, CONN.
NEW YORK STATE RHODE ISLAND	AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY BIBLE HOUSE, ASTOR PLACE NEW YORK CITY
NEW JERSEY PENNSYLVANIA	AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY 701 WALNUT STREET PHILADELPHIA, PA.
DELAWARE MARYLAND	AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY 9 EAST FRANKLIN STREET BALTIMORE, MD.
DIST. OF COL.	OR 721 WOODWARD BLDG. WASHINGTON, D. C.
VIRGINIA WEST VIRGINIA NORTH CAROLINA SOUTH CAROLINA GEORGIA FLORIDA	AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY 218 NORTH ADAMS STREET RICHMOND, VA.
OHIO KENTUCKY TENNESSEE ALABAMA MISSISSIPPI	AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY 424 ELM STREET CINCINNATI, O.

FOR	ADDRESS
ILLINOIS INDIANA MICHIGAN WISCONSIN MINNESOTA IOWA MISSOURI (EXCEPT KANSAS CITY, MO.) NORTH DAKOTA SOUTH DAKOTA	AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY 35 EAST WACKER DRIVE CHICAGO, ILL.
TEXAS OKLAHOMA LOUISIANA ARKANSAS	AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY 905 MAIN STREET DALLAS, TEXAS
COLORADO KANSAS (KANSAS CITY, MO.) NEBRASKA WYOMING MONTANA IDAHO UTAH ARIZONA NEW MEXICO	AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY 1515 LARIMER STREET DENVER, COLO.
CALIFORNIA NEVADA OREGON WASHINGTON ALASKA HAWAII	AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY 250 GOLDEN GATE AVENUE SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.
COLORED PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES	AGENCY AMONG THE COLORED PEOPLE OF THE U. S. BIBLE HOUSE, ASTOR PLACE NEW YORK CITY
ATLANTA DIVISION	REV. H. W. B. WILSON, D.D. 56 GAMMON AVE., S. E., ATLANTA, GA.
HOUSTON DIVISION	REV. M. L. VAUGHTERS 1013-15 HEINER STREET, HOUSTON, TEX.
CLEVELAND DIVISION	REV. S. A. LUCAS 2316 E. 55TH STREET, CLEVELAND, OHIO
CHARLOTTE DIVISION	REV. D. H. SANSOM, JR. 403 E. 3D STREET, CHARLOTTE, N. C.

Agency Centers Abroad

MEXICO CITY HAVANA CRISTOBAL LIMA

RIO DE JANEIRO BUENOS AIRES

VIENNA CONSTANTINOPLE CAIRO

TOKYO SHANGHAI MANILA BANGKOK

AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY

BIBLE HOUSE, ASTOR PLACE

NEW YORK, N. Y.